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# The Spirit of the Beautiful.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

ENOSINIAN SOCIETY

OF

COLUMBIAN COLLEGE,

BY

OTIS T. MASON, A. M.

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JUNE 22, 1863.

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WASHINGTON;

MCGILL & WITHERROW, PRINTERS AND STEREOTYPER.

1863.





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*MURKIN*

## Correspondence.

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COLLEGE HILL, November 12, 1863.

DEAR SIR:

At a meeting of the Enosinian Society held November 7th, 1863, it was unanimously resolved, that the thanks of the Society be tendered you for the very beautiful poem recited before them on the occasion of their Annual Celebration in June last; also, that a copy of your poem be requested for publication.

In accordance with the above, the undersigned were appointed a committee to notify you of the action of the Society.

Very respectfully, your obedient servants,

THOMAS S. SAMSON,  
REGINALD FENDALL,  
W. F. C. MORSELL,

*Committee.*

OTIS T. MASON, A. M.

---

WASHINGTON, December 1, 1863.

T. S. SAMSON AND GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE:

You have kindly asked a copy of the poem delivered before your Society in June last, for publication. As it is the property of the Society, I cheerfully submit it to your disposal.

Truly yours, &c.,

O. T. MASON.



For here's a paper written in his hand,  
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, ACT V, SC. 4.



## DY SE M.

---

KIND ENOSINIANS! at your gracious call  
We come, to render at the shrine of song  
Our lowly offering. While from trench and wall  
The war cry drives the tide of death along,  
And men are tossing on this troubled sea  
Of blood; while women wail and orphans shriek,  
And famine mocks, and the reality  
Has stripped the pageantry from war, there speaks  
A voice familiar, higher than the storm,  
Whose sweetness faileth not in every hour  
To calm the troubled waters of alarm,  
By the sweet magic of its wondrous power,—  
The seraph's voice, that rules the Beautiful,  
Whose inspiration, in diverse degree,  
Thrills all her childreu meek and dutiful,  
Thrilleth the highest, thrilleth you and me.  
To-night we come, as they were wont of old,  
Whose songs resounding stirred the blue Ægean,  
To add one humble tribute, not of gold,  
Or incense, or the sanguinary paean;  
Content are we to pluck the lowliest flower,  
To deck her altar for the passing hour.

One shrine there is where every spirit pays  
Its homage, bowing lowlily, and feels  
A living vigor there, prepared to raise  
It from the altar stool whereon it kneels;

Whereat the babe holds out its tiny arms ;  
 Whose radiance lightens up the school boys' face ;  
 That gleams auroral o'er the maiden's charms  
 Where love inhales its energy and grace ;  
 Where sturdy manhood locked in the embrace  
 Of lovely womanhood its light implores ;  
 Where age, o'erfurrowed by times truest trace,  
 Some long-chased, flying phantom shape adores ;  
 Where each fond mother immolates her pride ;  
 And each proud father heeds some call of faith  
 To sacrifice a darling son, to guide  
 The hand of fortune, empty flattering wraith ;  
 Where every mourner goes to dry his tears ;  
 Where each sad heart some faint relief would find ;  
 Guilt hath a hope along the wrecking years,  
 To wear at last the misery from the mind ;  
 Whence faith looks far, far up the starry dome,  
 As high in height as low her lowness,  
 And waiteth long for the blest hour to come,  
 Of full fruition, and of swift redress.  
 There's many a shrine, and many a triumph car  
 Worshipped before by all the giddy throng ;  
 Yet that of Beauty hath more votaries far,  
 Than bear the echoing of their praise along.

Our lives are that, the mode of which is prayer  
 For strength in weakness, for the manly will  
 To face with courage, for a heart to bear  
 The judgments time shall pass and shall fulfill ;  
 But most of all a prayer that we may see  
 The unscanned Beauty of eternity.

Our wants are many, for the craving heart  
 Is ever hoping, e'er aspiring higher ;  
 Nor lets one moment to th' Unknown depart,  
 It has not fraught with some intense desire.  
 Yet, could we shake the grossness from the mind,  
 And more and more grow God-like, till the ear  
 Of our quick souls could catch the note that told  
 Man's deepest yearning and profoundest fear,

Then could we stand mid-air while earth went round,  
 Uplifting as it rolled one general wail,  
 The tidal wave of sorrow ; this one sound  
 Above the shoreless sea would most prevail :  
 Take knowledge, culture, every hot desire ;  
 Give us of soul-stirred sorrow no surcease ;  
 Try us till tried in the refining fire,  
 But give, oh ! give us, Beauty's smiling face.  
 Give us to feel that this is not the verge  
 Of hope, where mind and soul and spirit all  
 Conflict; and these enfolding forms but urge  
 The doom, the death, the fearful wreck of all.  
 Oh God ! thou art a mocker, and we crowned  
 Aright thy Christ with thorns ; His sacred feet  
 Were wearied, and the raging rabble bound  
 And crucified Him rightly ; it was meet,  
 If war, wetshed in gore, and widow's weeds,  
 And orphan tears, and starveling cries, and wail  
 Of the wild requiem over our misdeeds,  
 Go all unheeded—all be born to fail.  
 But naught shall fail, since Beauty's highest height  
 Is reached in Him, the source of all her light ;  
 For, could the grave anoint with healing clay—  
 As Christ the man's born blind—our failing eyes,  
 Then, in life's river washed, they'd ope to see  
 Earth's brightest beacon. Faith, elate, would rise  
 First on the sight ; and with each human hope  
 Would—more than they that watch for morning—wait  
 For harmony ; each prescient heart would cope  
 With angel heralds, hurrying to her gate.

Thou, dearer far than life ! By the same faith  
 With which we trust The Life, The Truth, The Way,  
 Believe we, whatsoe'er our longing saith  
 Of thee, shall reach us in a brighter day.  
 E'en here, where social ties have bound in one  
 Speech, nations, empires, or the roving band ;  
 Where'er the light of Learning hath begun  
 To gleam, though ne'er so faintly, o'er a land,

Some sacred shrine to thee they've singled out ;  
 Some mountain grotto, some secluded dell,  
 Where, all the noisy world barred safely out,  
 They might at times with thee in rapture dwell.

Thou sweet inspirer of the measured lay !—  
 Who wert, when Paradise serenely slept,  
 A shadowy forecast of the yet to be  
 Developed purpose, all securely kept  
 In the ordaining mind of Him, who spake,  
 And each material and ethereal thing  
 Became a word, the form articulate  
 Of His intention and predestining ;  
 Who art thyself a word, interpreted  
 Creator, giving life to something dead—  
 Come ! heal our halting feet, our fainting hearts ;  
 Teach us to keep sweet time to love's refrain ;  
 Crimson our pallid cheeks ; haste to impart  
 A lustre to our eyes, whose souls would fain  
 With thee now mount the ever-stEEPening way,  
 Down which thy sacred feet to us have trod ;  
 That we from thine own lips may learn thy lay :  
 Which, lisping o'er till learned, along the road  
 That skirts this lowland, when thy sun hath set  
 With all for which its genial beams were given,  
 We'll reach thy sphere, where sweeter chords than yet  
 We've heard shall sweep us through the gates of heaven.  
 We wait before thy gate for a reply  
*Pilate.* To Herod's question. What, O what is truth ?  
 If we describe thee falsely, or deny  
 Thy truthful form, we beg thy light and ruth.

There was a time when not a glittering star  
 Went gently gliding in its restless round ;  
 When not an angel glory gleamed afar,  
 Or angel finger silence waked to sound ;  
 When God, existing free, unmanifest  
 Save in the mirror of his own deep love,  
 Sublimely pleased, sat silently and blest ;  
 And this bright scene, this is the scheme he wove,

Where formed He, first among the shining host,  
 The "Inspiration Angel," beauty-born,  
 Foreshadowing the glory of all time,  
 His minister to bear His praise along—  
 The herald of a prophet more sublime.

Before th' empyreal throne, lowly reclining,  
 And leaning on her hand her peerless head,  
 Intent she gazed about her, as divining  
 The mystery there, by her and all unread,  
 While the deep travail of his purposing  
 Brings forth the shape, and while he breathes upon  
 And adds the bold, distinctive surfacing  
 Of angel, seraph, satellite, or sun.  
 Then, stooping down to her, the fairest born  
 Of all the creatures of his spirit-realm,  
 Saw in her face the blush of Beauty's morn,  
 Parted her golden locks, and from the helm  
 Of his vast kingdom, pointed to a cloud  
 Peering afar, upon the very verge  
 Of the wide welkin, duskily endowed  
 With shape, from chaos merging to emerge.  
 There, daughter, shalt thou amplify thy soul,  
 Till, as the dew of morning, thy sweet breath  
 Suffusing all, thy erested wave shall roll  
 Its interrippings over life and death.  
 Bowing, the angel said "I will obey;"  
 And lightly skimmed adown th' ethereal main,  
 Followed along her shining embassy  
 By kindred voices in this sad refrain :

" We shall miss thee, sister spirit !  
     Turned from those who here adore thee,  
     Though each smile you here inherit,  
     Trust us, there shall hover o'er thee.

" Demons curse thee, downward shrinking,  
     Tremble, dreading trouble pending,  
     Sorrow unto pain are linking,  
     Envious glances at thee sending.

“ Father loving, heart impressing  
 Spirit, Christ the Son endearing,  
 Kindred watch thee swift addressing  
 To the throne of thy appearing.”

And thus, innumerable cycles back  
 That mark the circling of the years around,  
 When this firm earth was but a vapory tract,  
 To neither motion, law, nor season bound,  
 The angel of Imagination stood  
 Communing with her heart, and conning o'er  
 The far-off compound interest of good  
 At last accruing on the nether shore,  
 Where, freed from our pent orb'ing round and round,  
 We'll catch the perfect music of the spheres,  
 And ever on a higher mission bound,  
 Shall burgeon out along the glowing years.  
 There in the crucible of time she wrought  
 The hills, “ rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun,”  
 Pressed down the valleys, smote the rocks enfraught  
 With Prattling streamlets dancing as they run ;  
 There dashed the waves, that wore their barriers rife  
 With bays and seas pushed inward on the land ;  
 There veined the mountains with their precious life,  
 And gemmed the streamlets with their jewel sand ;  
 Threw wide the windows of the firmament  
 To catch the twinkling of the golden stars ;  
 Spread her green sward ; evoked the infinite  
 Of loveliness apparent everywhere ;  
 There gave a dreamy azure to the air,  
 And fancy loosed to wanton with the clouds,  
 When nature reveled in her embryo year,  
 And vocal grandeur sang her praise aloud.

Those for all men. Some sacred shrines she marks  
 Within her temples, where her altars stand ;  
 Where each crowned priest from year to year enarks  
 The gems of love that sparkle from her hand ;  
 Eden the lovely, prologue to them all ;  
 Ida, renowned for *Beauty's* victory ;

Olympus, Jove's high thundering capitol ;  
 The vale of Tempe, where the muses stray ;  
 Sweet Helicon, where Phoebus struck his lyre ;  
 Dread Eleusis, the poet's mystery ;  
 Arcadia, home of harmony retired ;  
 Bright Athens, Pallas' famed consistory ;  
 The vine-clad hills where Virgil had his birth ;  
 The Switzer's home and valley, beauty-shrined ;  
 The stern Norse warrior's icy rugged earth ;  
 The cliffs of Albion, cradled in the brine ;  
 Columbia, chosen by the will of God  
 To bear the shout of liberty along ;  
 Nor last, the land by holier feet o'er-trod,  
 She gave to sacred heavenly-burdened song.  
 Thus garnished, back to Eden bowers she flew.  
 The tinkling bluebells heard aloft in heaven,  
 Stirred by her drapery that tripped the dew,  
 Cried list ! till he she wrought it for be given.  
 Ten thousand hovering angel voices sang :

Sister we have heard the tinkle  
 Of the bluebells, far above thee  
 In the skies ;—  
 Looked, and lo ! the matin ingle  
 Was dissolved, again to mingle  
 Myriad dyes ;—

Heard a voice, “ Come let us make him ”  
 (Sweetly spake that voice above thee :)  
 “ Of the dust.

In our image let us make him,”  
 Saying, “ Let earth's angel take him,  
 To her trust.”

Now we come to see thee press him,  
 Press him as did He above thee,  
 To thy heart ;—  
 Come to see thee first caress him,  
 Come to hover o'er and bless him  
 For our part.

The spirit of that song took life and shone  
 On every scope. In every sound outrang,  
 "We wait, to exalt and garland o'er thy throne.'

There, like another God, did she eneize  
 The soul of him so like the Son of Man,  
 And seized his tongue, and from the bowed knees  
 Of humble faith, with influence that can  
 Move the dread arm that wields the universe,  
 Watching his ripening spirit, till one thought  
 Form of the outward, on the mind's reverse  
 Entablature was graven; then she caught  
 The imagery, and audibly upon the air,  
 Straightway within the ear, the vocal frame  
 Set up, the bodying of the spirit there,  
 The words that lend us to the roll of fame.  
 Yet once again, her friendly aid applied  
 In Eden, when in sleep she lulls to rest  
 Her ward, till from his intersected side,  
 Eve leaps, all panoplied. Here she suppressed  
 The antiquated word, the stern old root,  
 To form the richer, sweeter, gaylier dressed,  
 Prolific dialect of the grafted shoot  
 On the wild olive for delicious fruit.

Then to the pair. Image of God and form!  
 Ye I must trust, as I would trust your God.  
 Trusted too far, hence all this loss and harm,  
 Hence hatred, sorrow, and the valley clod.

Sang she, "Sisters, see my love,  
 There's sorrow in his home to-night;  
 My dream said he shall walk above,  
 His joy has taken flight.

"Will ye leave him naked now?  
 His fall will cry aloud, for ye  
 May yet succeed to make him bow  
 Again the stubborn knee.

"Faith, with all thy sister train,  
 Sweet Hope, with every glittering ray,

And Love, high hovering o'er the twain,  
Will ye then away?"

Thus mourned she, till their echoed back a choir  
Of sounds uncertain, jarring in the air,  
"We will—perhaps—at times we will, but higher,  
Farewell! forever farewell! guilty pair."  
But Love delaying took she by the hand,  
And kneeing there before the fiery gate,  
There came a voice, "Together ye'll remand  
The humbled victim to a higher state.  
The serpent's head the woman's seed shall bruise,  
And slowly pressing on the brain of sin,  
Shall grind him in his native dust, and loose  
The chain that binds her to that she hath been."  
Then rising from the altar stool of earth,  
They tripped from dewy morn till dusky even,  
Along the devious way of woe and mirth,  
That leads through beggary to a home in heaven.

Conscience has lost the way of righteousness;  
Reason but weakly binds to truthfulness;  
Will fails to hold the helm with steadiness;  
Fancy opposes wrong's unpleasantness  
With nature's beauty; but the tethered eye  
Grows sick and wearies, seeing o'er and o'er.  
The little bounded round of sweets that lie  
For eye and ear of each, forces the door  
Of our desires, that will not sate till all  
The unscanned beauty of the dancing spheres  
Commanded be to tend each spirit call,  
And pour its music on our quiekened ears.  
All nature's beauty and her dissonance  
Are but the plastic clay, from which she moulds  
A statue of th' ethereal forms, which chance  
Before her sentient fancy hath unrolled.  
These are her magic wand, wherewith to ope  
Love's gateway of her by-road to the soul  
That ever felt a thrill of joy, or hope  
Hath ever urged along to glory's goal.

With it she touched the Child; the future man  
 Or woman full exemplified, appears  
 To comprehend th' importance of his span,  
 Or all the mother runs before the years.

She touched the Youth; and airy castles rise  
 To kiss the flecking of each floating cloud  
 Which charms the dust of labor from the eyes,  
 And hides the scull beneath a crimsoned shroud.

She touched the Maiden; from her gleaming eye  
 Flashed out upon some heart the fatal shock  
 Of true heart lightning, rifting hopelessly  
 The citadel of love, till its base rock.

She touched the Mother;—shall I touch a theme  
 Too sacred for th' archangel's fiery tongue?—  
 Then gushed the fountain of earth's sweetest stream,  
 A mother's love. Oh stream, forever run.

She touched the Exile, far away he heard  
 The welcome warble of his mother-tongue,  
 Like the first warble of the welcome bird  
 That greets the spring when all around is young.

She touched the Chain that bound a righteous cause;  
 To shake th' oppressor, as at Philippi,  
 Bidding her chosen abrogate his laws  
 Unrighteous, daring there to do or die.

She touched the Miser; and his jaundiced eye  
 Gave to the world the yellow hue of gold;  
 Gilt was his head and heart; to sell and buy  
 He'll risk his soul, till his last knell is knolled.

She touched the Tyrant; and the clanking chain  
 Were mellow music, matched with all the choirs  
 That harmonize in heaven's sweet refrain,  
 When all the saintly fingers sweep their lyres.

She touched the Warrior ; and his nodding plume,  
 Dashed with the hue of cloud and blood and fire,  
 Brushed off the hate of strife and sorrow's gloom,  
 And gentle fingers swept the flattering lyre.

She touched the Drunkard ; and the reeling wreck  
 Went down ingulfed in death's relentless sea,  
 Glad if these fiendish phantom shapes could deck  
 His life, and thrill him in eternity.

There's not a heart so rude she passeth by ;  
 The faintest life hath vigor lent of hope,  
 And ever and anon weaves gaylily  
 The flowers of fancy plucked on every slope.  
 Thus kindly deals with all ; with special ruth  
 She leads her chosen through still vales, and by  
 Vauclusian fountains of unfading youth,  
 To plume their flight for immortality.  
 She taught the sculptor's chisel to evoke  
 From the cold marble, beauty everywhere  
 In myriad forms, until her crowning stroke,  
 A Venus or Apollo Belvidere,  
 Some architectural triumph have adorned.  
 Her monuments are seen uplifted high,  
 In pyramid and obelisk ; have formed  
 A bridge's eyebrow o'er a sparkling eye ;  
 Greet us in giant battlements four-square,  
 Against the foe who seeks to crush the land,  
 Or graceful capitol, uprearing where  
 Apollo spreads his gift with liberal hand.  
 Resting from labor, as the maker soul  
 That breathed her being into anxious life,  
 She plants the high Acropolis, the goal  
 Of toil, and bares her sacrificial knife,  
 To offer up her temple.gift of elegance—  
 An architectural Sabbath to the heart,  
 Apart, and far above the dissonance  
 Of the rude clacking in the world's loud mart.

She prompts the soul that moves the hand that guides  
 The pencil, to impress the shadowing

Of the ideal, when its form resides  
In all the synthesis of coloring.

Gives to each passion some key-note, to suit  
The harmony that wakes it through the ear ;  
Then fills the void with music, till the mute  
Spirit would dream the choral welkin near.

And yet more delicately touched,  
The poet's mind, pure as Ilissus, couched  
In fancy's dreamy verdure, where she hides  
Her numerous offspring. Ever at her breath  
They sally forth ; and being borne above  
Upon the mist, that like a cloudy wreath  
Is lifted by the genial beams of love,  
She clothes them in the babbling of the stream  
That sometimes trickles from a ruptured vein ;  
Sometimes goes gently gliding as a dream ;  
Sometimes leaps wildly down and purls again,  
Just coping round the pebbles ; then at play  
With the wild bluff, goes eddying round and round.  
Thus run's the poet's brain from theme to theme ;  
Nought is too rugged or too sweet for sound,  
From the blared bugle to the sunset gleam.  
She leads him o'er the pastoral, and chants  
Her Georgics to the rustic swain ; nay, lends  
In rudest times to memory, if she wants  
Her aid to eternize. Her genius blends  
With ho'rid war and battle-shrieks ; and when  
War is an art, sends down through every age,  
In the grand *Epic*, all the praise of men ;  
She scathes in *Satire* every cruel ban ;  
Chases in *Comic* mirth to her abode ;  
Dashes in murderous *Tragic* on the clan  
Of bloody wrongs, or sparkles in the *Ode*.

As to the workman's hand his tools, so to  
The hand of th' Inspiration Angel stood  
Art, Music, Poesy, wherewith to do  
Her work, and reap the golden crop of good.

Her labors greet us in our joyous hours ;  
 Nor these alone, but in the saddest scene,  
 She weaves a garland of the sweetest flowers,  
 And dying Nature clothes in gayest green.

As shame hurts pride, and hides from hot desire  
 Beneath a flimsy fig-leaf covering,  
 The fetid form, the sombre weeds, the pyre,  
 Offend the high seraphic hovering  
 Of Beauty's Angel, hiding in the grave  
 The casket of the disembodied soul ;  
 Hiding the hate of death beneath the wave  
 Of one wide scope of beauty, o'er the whole  
 Where, 'neath her feet, the grasses wave and bloom,  
 And myriad daisies, feeding on the dead,  
 Shroud the cold clay ; or where the gorgeous tomb  
 Or mausoleum deck the low-lain head.

She names Death Sleep ; upon the canvas, bids  
 A purer life breath out of every line ;  
 Wafts a sweet quiet o'er the heavy lids  
 Of the flushed eye, at Music's holy shrine ;  
 Wraps the sad spirit in the sable weeds  
 Of the elegiac, bodying out the gloom  
 Of inward loneliness, or ere it feeds  
 Upon a life o'ertopping to its doom.

Should weary reason tremble on its throne,  
 Her voice could lull the maniac back to peace,  
 Whom "melancholy marketh for her own,"  
 Her voice could charm again to liveliness.

Boom the loud cannon o'er the watery waste,  
 The dead rise up we grappled for in vain ;  
 So science grapples for the truth thou sayest,  
 Down deep and wide about her vast domain ;  
 Yet mighty truths in their fair light have loomed,  
 When o'er the reaching tide her voice hath boomed.

Oft on the tented field hath freedom called  
 Her few devoted sons, to feel the blow  
 Of tyrants, or of traitors ; unappalled  
 They follow on, and oft have laid them low.

But Pride again hath dashed the rowels deep  
 Into the side of lust, ambition, greed,  
 And nigh o'erridden liberty, to reap  
 A bloody harvest, on her fertile meed ;  
 There courage bleeding lay ; revenge that lit  
 The torch, that smote, that cleft ; and hope  
 That pointed through the bloody gorge, through it  
 To brighter scenes, both faint along the slope.  
 Then when the battle breeze hath rent their trust,  
 And shock of doom hath given the palm to pride,  
 When fire of trial tried the true and just,  
 Deep in each heart, her still small voice replied,

“ Sons of your sires, awake !  
 To arms ! To arms !  
 War, when your name's at stake,  
 Hath no alarms.  
 Die for your children's sake !  
 Blood for them warms ;  
 Then for your watchword take,  
 Our wives, our homes !  
 Strike for the civil bond, lay down your souls  
 For God, for right ; to wrong deal a death dole.

“ Gladly your father's bled,  
 Suffered and died ;  
 Gladly they flung the stead  
 Of joy aside.  
 You their dear children fed,  
 Grew at their side,  
 Nursed by the hand they wed,  
 Fond mother's pride ;  
 The flag of justice shadowing their sod,  
 They gave to you, religion, and to God.

“ Ne'er let your children say  
 Ye were a craven,  
 Ne'er let them know the day  
 Fear was engraven.

Fight for them, strike home ! slay !  
 Till red the heavens—  
 Then hope of your partner clay  
 To be forgiven.

Give them a proud emblem to deck their sky,  
 In solemn court ye'll meet them bye and bye."

Then flashed the dawn of freedom far and wide—  
 Then fled her invader to his utmost bound ;  
 Fired by her battle-song, her stalwart pride  
 Lays the grim giant weltering in his wound.  
 Oh, song immortal ! may'st thou ever be  
 The guard of virtue, liberty, and right !  
 Be thou to cheer them in the thickest fight,  
 And kiss them with a glorious victory.

Thus roll her orbs of love and gracefulness,  
 Where every new-born Paradise appears !  
 Her seasons run with willing haste to bless,  
 And magnify, and hail her through the years :  
 First, clad in Iris' spring-time, blossom-flecked,  
 And beauty crowned—embannered far and wide ;  
 In silver radiant summer, harvest-decked—  
 In nature glorified and purified ;  
 As golden autumn—mellow, flowing o'er  
 With all the gladsome wine of steep and glen—  
 Beneath whose shows the embryo bud and flower  
 Of their next season, forms beyond our ken ;  
 Then weary winter-robed, when they are gone—  
 These beauteous ones—to cheer the heart no more ;  
 But in its cradle sheath is slumbering on  
 The bud ; and, mother-like, the storms weep o'er ;  
 The wild winds rock, and birds sing o'er its nest,  
 Till later springs shall wake it from its rest ;  
 So, some would say, the works of art sublime  
 No more shall rise and greet a glowing age ;  
 Chilled by the breath of truth, their blossom time  
 No more will glisten on time's ample page !  
 No more the glittering of their golden stars  
 Rise, triumph o'er us, set, and rise again,

Eclipsed by science, bursting through the bars  
 Of her dark night, and beaming from her fane.  
 But music too, and poesy, and art,  
 Her kin, may live beyond the frost of wrong ;  
 For while there's life-blood in the world's great heart,  
 Shall their warm sunshine urge its flow along.

Though never more a Homer's ample lay  
 Embalm the story of heroic times,  
 Or Raphael's spirit with the rainbow play—  
 Or Phidias rear the type of Beauty's lines ;  
 (So howled the critics of our mother isle,  
 When Milton once again took up the lute ;  
 But Milton's song shall rule our homely style  
 For many a year when Homer's song is mute ;)  
 Whene'er again a call comes o'er the waste,  
 To conquer strife or cheat the world of pain,  
 Earth's brightest angel waiteth calm and chaste  
 To meet our yearnings and our fears restrain.

Though far aback along the misty way,  
 Old forms that now o'ertopple to their doom,  
 High-reared excluding us from light of day,  
 May see the prophet of their downfall loom,  
 Yet bar the window of the soul, that drinks  
 The rustic gabble of a giddy sphere,  
 And lull the spirit nerve until it sinks  
 To that calmness the upper angels wear ;  
 Far up the dusky aisle the quickened ear  
 May catch sweet strains of loftier music far  
 Than swelled or died along the wrecking years  
 Of time. Bright as an undimmed star,  
 Hand grasping hand—she winds the devious way  
 Of piety, religion at her side,  
 Tuning the heartstrings to a lasting lay  
 Of accents, broken on this ruthless tide  
 Of life, perfected in eternity.

She thrills the Christian mother o'er her child,  
 In songs that echo through the man to be,  
 She gives to us when the hot heart is wild,  
 To her beloved, songs to cheer the night ;  
 Whose chorus caught is sent from shore to shore,

Till now, when Sabbath morn, alike the bright  
Leader of tides, revolves around and o'er  
The earth, upward is borne a tidal wave  
Of sacred music over land and sea,  
In every tongue—the highest and the slave  
Rejoice together o'er the man to be.  
And yet a higher bound is set to song  
Immortal, in a wider circle where  
Adown death's rugged steep the trains sweep on  
Through the dark river, to the home wherein  
One universal praise shall crown their days,  
With her sole empress in the golden strife  
Wherein discord has failed, and in her praise  
Her faithful votaries pass an endless life.





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